

Ashland

Ashland Chemical Company

DIVISION OF ASHLAND OIL, INC.

3350 SOUTH ZUNI STREET, SHERIDAN, COLORADO • (303) 789-1888

RECEIVED

REPLY TO:
P.O. Box 1358
Englewood, Colorado 80110

July 31, 1981

AUG 03 '81

Regional Administrator
USEPA REGION 8
1860 Lincoln St
Denver, CO 80295

WASTE MGT. BR.

To Whom It May Concern:

The following information is a report describing the chemical spill of Tetrahydrofuran which occurred on July 18, 1981 at Ashland Chemical Co, 3350 South Zuni Street, Englewood, CO 80110 (Sheridan, CO 80150).

On Thursday July 16, 1981, Ashland Chemical Company received a box car load of new drums and unloaded it. On Friday, July 17th, at 11:00 AM, we called and asked the railroad to switch the car of Tetrahydrofuran with the now empty box car. Unfortunately, the railroad had already been in our area (several hours sooner than usual) and thus we were advised we would have to wait until Saturday, July 18, 1981 for the switch. The railroad was asked to arrive early AM on the 18th. (See letter attached). Unfortunately the railroad did not arrive, so the employees of Ashland decided at 8:45 AM to hook up over 100 feet of hose and unload the bulk Tetrahydrofuran railcar. We had to unload the car on the 18th for delivery of product to our customer on Monday. After checking the connections and hoses for possible leaks, the employees began drumming off the Tetrahydrofuran in the drum fill area of the plant. After three hours of drumming a worker from a building two doors from Ashland (approximately 11:45 AM) advised the employees of a chemical odor out near the railcar. The employees immediately shut off the pump and ran out to the railcar. Upon arrival they found a ruptured hose which was leaking Tetrahydrofuran. They immediately called the fire department and at that time, I, Tom Henehan, District Manager, happened to arrive. (I was going to release the car to the railroad if the employees were finished with the drumming.) Cary Weaver, Assistant Chief for the Sheridan Fire Department, took control of the spill upon arrival of the fire department. He blocked off the area and applied a light water over the spill to knock down any fumes.

I called the emergency #303-320-1465 and June Dreith of the Health Department said she would advise the EPA. She called back and said the EPA had been notified. I called Chem Trec 1-800-424-8802 and also called Ashland Oil - emergency # 606-324-1133.

Cary Weaver advised me to call a chemical spill waste removal company, so I called Chemical Waste Management, Mary Ann Walls, 303-629-6914, and she sent a 3500 gallon bulk tanker for clean up. Cary Weaver, as a precaution, evacuated several homes across the street from Ashland (at approximately 1:15 PM). At approximately 1:30 PM the 3500 gallon tanker arrived and began sucking up the spill. The spill had been contained by the Ashland employees and the fire department in a swamp-like area near the tracks. There was standing water in the swamp area so the Tetrahydrofuran-water mixture would have to be sucked up.

The Chemical Waste driver advised Cary Weaver the truck was full at approximately 2:10 PM, so another Chemical Waste Management truck was dispatched. This one was a 5000 gallon truck. It arrived at approximately 4:00 PM. The railroad finally showed up at 3:00 PM and obviously it was too late for any switch and Mr. Weaver and I advised them to immediately leave the area. The driver of Chemical Waste advised Mr. Weaver at about 5:30 PM that the 5000 gallon truck was full.

At approximately 6:00 PM I had an Ashland employee drum off a 9800 gallon bulk tank, (it only had approximately 200 gallons of product in it), and the driver began pumping the 3500 gallon load and the 5000 gallon load of Tetrahydrofuran-water mixture into this tank. The Chemical Waste driver was advised by Cary Weaver to go back over with the 3500 gallon tanker and suck up the balance of the spill. This was done and also placed in the tank. The spill had been cleaned up.

We had lost 4100 gallons of Tetrahydrofuran. We had been shipped 9800 gallons and had drummed off 5700 gallons and thus the difference was 4100 gallons. On Monday, July 20th, we took a sample of the Tetrahydrofuran-water mixture from the top of the tank in order to send to our lab. At that time we noticed the 9800 gallon tank was not full as we believed it should be since the driver for Chemical Waste said the two trucks, 3500 gallons and 5000 gallons, were full. Since the trucks work on a pressure system, apparently a malfunction of the trucks had occurred. We only had in our tank approximately 2200-2300 gallons of product and the balance of the Tetrahydrofuran must of evaporated as fast as it was leaking.

Our chemist on Monday, July 20th, determined that the 2200 gallon mixture of Tetrahydrofuran-water contained approximately 52% Tetrahydrofuran and 48% water.

Thus we will be working with the Chemical Waste Management people to properly dispose of this mixture. If I can be of further help, please contact me.

Sincerely,


Tom C. Hennehan
District Manager

TH/mm